

ELEMENTS OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Promoting Community Change for Children with Special Health Care Needs

1. Build on Community Assets

Resources are what the community has going for itself. The simple act of recognizing its resources gives a community a sense of confidence, a sense of energy and willingness to take action. When the community believes that assets exist, it finds them, and uses them; it affects the entire way the community is viewed.

2. Increase Skills of Individuals

The community assumes a more skilled condition, not just one of services, following community development intervention. A particular activity, such as creating an information center, stimulates learning around fundraising, media relations, public speaking, marketing and writing.

3. Connect People with Each Other to Build Relationships and Share Talents, Energy and Information

Everything happens through relationships. Connecting people together in a purposeful manner produces some clear, intended benefits. Unintended, almost serendipitous benefits are just as intriguing, as relationships drive other relationships.

4. Connect Existing Resources ... Create or Increase Community Resources

A high school shop class ... a construction company with lumber ... an information center has new bookshelves and new investors in its success.

5. Community Assumes Ownership of Direction, Action, and Resources

The community decides what to do, and how to do it, not the agency. The agency doesn't seek to extend itself, own more things, or run more things. What the community produces is theirs.

6. Community Members do All Work Possible

A community needs a well dug. Dig us a well, they say. Nope, we say. We'll help you dig your well, first by looking at all the things the community can do to dig the well. Only someone outside of the community will do those things on the list that can't be done by the community. The community has its well, more skilled members, and sense of its ability, not disability.

7. Create Beneficial External Relationships

Communities connect with each other and with other external supports, such as the Office for Children with Special Health Care Needs (OCSHCN), bringing in needed assistance to expand skills, offer support and share resources.

8. Increase Community Self-Reliance and Confidence

All these actions help a community to believe in itself and its abilities. And as it tackles and solves one issue, it becomes more skilled and confident in tackling the next one.

9. Build Self-Sustaining Organizations

Organized action brings new energy, new leadership, and new vitality. The organization takes care of itself as it takes care of community issues.

10. Enhance Quality of Life

The community moves past problems, to believe that better is possible, it is even likely. It is certainly deserved and can be expected.